

**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 2 line 5 with the following rewritten paragraph:

Accordingly, the present invention provides a valve plate assembly having a plurality of reed valves; each reed valve comprising a reed, a port which is opened and closed by the reed, and damper means for mechanically damping motion of the reed; the damper means comprising a tube which is attached to a valve plate, which extends vertically into a suction gas chamber, which is in communication with the port on a side of the port remote from the reed, and which is of such a size that, in use of the valve plate assembly, the tube contains a column of fluid which is sufficient to provide substantial mechanical damping of the motion of the reed.

Please replace the two paragraphs at page 3 line 27 – page 4 line 9 with the following two rewritten paragraphs:

The inlet side is provided with a valve plate assembly 9. The valve plate assembly 9 comprises a reed 11 and a port 13 which is provided in the valve plate 7 and which is opened and closed by the reed 11. The valve plate assembly 9 also comprises damper means 15 for the reed 11.

The damper means 15 comprises a tube 17 which is attached to the valve plate 7 and which extends vertically into a suction gas chamber as shown. The tube 17 is in communication with the port 13 on a side 19 of the port 13 remote from the reed 11. The tube 17 is of such a size that, in use of the valve plate assembly 9, the tube 17 contains sufficient fluid to provide substantial damping for the reed 11.